

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8562
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, PINS, IS, JO
SUBJ: CALL ON RAMALLAH MAYOR KHALAF, DECEMBER 21

REF: JERUSALEM 1612

1. DURING INITIAL COURTESY CALL DECEMBER 21,76 DPO,
RAMALLAH MAYOR KHALAF GAVE HIS VIEWS ON WEST BANK
ATTITUDES TOWARD PLO, NATURE OF FUTURE PALESTINIAN
STATE, AND VAT.

2. KHALAF UNDERScoreD HIS TOTAL PERSONAL SUPPORT
FOR ARAFAT IN CONTEXT OF CURRENT INTRA-PLO STRUGGLES.
HE STATED THAT LARGE MAJORITY OF PALESTINIANS WITHIN PLO
ORGANIZATION AND ON WEST BANK ARE SOLIDLY BEHIND
ARAFAT. CONTRARY TO CERTAIN PRESS REPORTS, KHALAF
THOUGHT THAT LIKELY EXPANSION OF PNC TO 400 MEMBERS
WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO ARAFAT.

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3. AS TO WEST BANK PARTICIPATION IN UPCOMING
PNC MEETING, KHALAF SAID THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED
WITH MILGOV OFFICIALS POSSIBILITY OF WEST BANK
REPS ATTENDING AND HAD BEEN REFUSED PERMISSION.
ACCORDINGLY, HE WILL NOT ATTEND BECAUSE HE FEARED NOT
BEING ABLE TO RETURN AFTERWARD. BY WAY OF ILLUSTRATING

MILGOV FROWNING ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY, DURING OUR CONVERSATION KHALAF RECEIVED TELEPHONE CALL FROM MILGOV OFFICIAL WHO EXPRESSED DISPLEASURE AT KHALAF'S SPEAKING PREVIOUS EVENING TO A GROUP OF STUDENTS AT BIR ZEIT UNIVERSITY AT WHICH TIME HE HAD GIVEN POLITICAL OPINIONS I.E. THAT HE WOULD BE SATISFIED WITH INDEPENDENT WEST BANK/GAZA STATE.

4. IN LIEU OF PERSONAL ATTENDANCE BY WEST BANKERS AT PNC MEETING, KHALAF GAVE RUNDOWN OF CURRENT STATUS OF MESSAGE WHICH MAYORS ARE PREPARING TO SEND TO MEETING (SEE JERUSALEM 1612). MAJOR POINTS IN MESSAGE WHICH KHALAF SAYS CONTAINS NO REFERENCE TO U.S., ARE (1) CALL FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL; (2) SUPPORT FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE IN TERRITORY WITHIN PRE-1967 BOUNDARIES ALONG WITH CLAIM FOR PRE-1967 RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS, AND (3) SUPPORT FOR PLO AS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINAINS (NABLUS). ALTHOUGH MOST MAYORS WITH NOTABLE EXCEPTION PF SHAKA AND FREIJ (BETH-LEHEM) HAD SIGNED STATEMENT, KHALAF SAID THAT SOME HAVE HAD SECOND THOUGHTS AND HE ADMITTED HAVING TROUBLE KEEPING THEM ALL ON BOARD. ONE PARTICULAR PROBLEM WAS FORMULATION SPELLING OUT BOUNDARIES OF NEW STATE "ALONG PRE 1967 LINES. SOME MAYORS PREFERRED MORE GENERAL WORKING WHICH WOULD SPEAK OF PALESTINIAN STATE "IN OCCUPIED HANDS." KHALAF INSISTED THAT PRESENT WORKING OF DECLARATION WAS WHAT ARAFAT WANTED AND WAS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT HIM AS OPPOSED TO REJECTIONISTS SUCH AS HABASH WHO WISH TO RETAIN AIM OF DEMOCRATIC SECULAR STATE IN ALL PALESTINE.

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5. ASIDE FROM REJECTIONIST STATES SUCH AS IRAQ AND LIBYA, KHALAF DIVIDED ARAB WORLD INTO TWO CAMPS ON PALESTINE ISSUE. THE FIRST GROUP INCLUDING EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND GULF STATES FAVORED ESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE IN WEST BANK/GAZA WHILE THE OTHER, COMPOSED OF SYRIA AND JORDAN, WANTED A WEST BANK/GAZA STATE FEDERATED WITH JORDAN AND SYRIA.

6. ON VAT ISSUE, KHALAF SAID THAT HE ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO PERSUADE FREIJ THAT WEST BANK MAYORS NOT ONLY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPS, SHOULD BE INVOLVED DIRECTLY IN VAT DISCUSSIONS. KHALAF SAID THAT FREIJ WAS TO HAVE TALKS WITH MILGOV OFFICIALS DEC 21. HE THOUGHT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT ISRAELIS MIGHT DECIDE TO POSTPONE COLLECTION OF VAT FOR A YEAR.

7. COMMENT: DESPITE HIS ASSURANCES THAT WEST BANKERS ARE SOLIDLY BEHIND ARAFAT, IT IS CLEAR FROM KHALAF'S ADMITTED

DIFFICULTIES WITH TEXT OF WEST BANK STATEMENT THAT SOME
WEST BANK MAYORS WANT TO HEDGE THEIR BETS ON ARAFAT
UNTIL DUST SETTLES SOME MORE FROM DEC 12. DAMASCUS
CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING.
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